

■ A Day in the Life of...

CVSD "Cops" Always on the Go

By Kelly Manning

"S-33 to I-117"

"S-33 go ahead"

"White truck in left lane, red stripe on back door, clocked at 80 mph."

While this "law enforcement speak" may sound foreign to most employees at the DMV, Sgt. Dennis Maurice has just informed Inspector Amy Jones, both of CVSD's Motor Carrier Inspection Unit, to stop a box truck that is speeding in the left lane of Interstate 91 North.

After taking off with a squealing siren on and working her way through traffic, Amy catches up to the truck and quickly pulls the driver over. Upon reviewing his information and looking inside the back of the vehicle, she issues the driver over \$450 in fines for his moving violations.

Many of us within the agency may not be aware that CVSD's Motor Carrier Inspection Unit, also known as the "Truck Squad," is on the front line enforcing laws to keep Connecticut's roadways safe. And this could mean putting their own lives in danger.

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CVSD Inspector Amy Jones converses with a driver while performing a safety inspection of his truck. This duty is one of many vital functions of an inspector's job.

■ Tales of Customer Service

Got Ideas?

New Program Welcomes Creative Suggestions to Improve the Agency

By Ernie Bertothy

There's a new way to make the DMV a better place.

On Jan. 11, Commissioner Ralph J. Carpenter announced the launching of the DMV's new on-line employee suggestion program. Now, sharing your ideas on how to improve the DMV is just a few keystrokes away.

"There's always room for an organization to grow and improve," Commissioner Carpenter said. "Every employee is encouraged to offer his or her ideas, whether they affect the agency as a whole or a specific unit."

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■ Commissioner's Column

In 2005, Plenty of Positives to Note

Greetings,

I would like to wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year. It gives us the opportunity to look back to enjoy our successes and to look ahead to achievements we hope to gain. I am doing the same as the anniversary approaches for serving my first year as DMV Commissioner. It's been a heart-warming experience getting to know many of you, learning about your lives, sharing in both your joys as well as sadness, and charting a continued path of success for the agency.

Yes, we've had both success and disappointment in the last year. Among those efforts of which I'm proud are the:

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technology systems in the agency;

- More opportunities for training in a variety of areas;

- Efforts to continue to develop the team atmosphere in the agency;

- Quick and efficient responses to immediate areas of concern such as truck safety and fraud in the licensing process;

- And improved communication to employees through the newsletter, employee suggestion program and enhanced support for the Employee Recognition Committee.

These count among the many successes I've seen us all achieve during the last year. I am grateful for your hard work and dedication toward these goals.

And, of course, we've had our disappointments. Certainly none of us feel good about the unfolding incidents of alleged wrongdoing in our licensing process. Like you, I share the opinion that news reports focus too often on the bad rather than good done each day among all our employees. It is important

for all of us to remember that only a few employees have broken that public trust. I tell everyone wherever I go that the vast majority of DMV employees are among the most dedicated public servants I've met and often work under challenging conditions of helping sweeping numbers of the public. As we know well, our agency reaches into the homes of nearly every resident of the state. Many of them come to us with an issue and you try hard to resolve it in a way that is satisfactory to the customer.

As your Commissioner, I know that during my tenure many issues will be addressed, but we won't get to all issues. It is the team effort that will help us discover those most important. Although we are stretched for money and sometimes thin on staff, your optimism and resilience makes me very proud. Thank you and I'm looking forward to working with you in the upcoming year.

New Program Welcomes Employees' Ideas

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The system is simple. Suggestions can be submitted via e-mail to DMV.Suggestions@dmvct.org or by an employee suggestion form, which can be downloaded from the DMV Intranet site and sent through intradepartmental mail to Ernie Bertothy, of the Corporate and Public Relations Unit, at the Rowland State Government Center, 55 West Main St., in Waterbury. Hard copies of the form will soon be available in each DMV office.

Employees should allow up to 15 business days from when the suggestion is received for a response. But, make no mistake, no suggestion will go unnoticed.

"Every suggestion will be given consideration," Commissioner Carpenter said. "You can never have enough new ideas."

ERC Events Keep Coming in New Year

By Marj Knecht

The Employee Recognition Committee recently purchased gift certificates from a local department store in order to aid two employees dealing with tragic circumstances. The generous support by DMV staff of ERC fundraisers and activities makes this type of assistance possible. The recipients find comfort knowing that their co-workers and friends are ready to help them both emotionally and financially in their difficult times. Through the ERC, the generosity and compassion of DMV employees is showcased.

There will be an informational flyer for "Little Caesar's" pizza. Upon first glance, it looks as if it offers only 'fixins' for making pizzas, but take another look! Sweet-lovers can select a kit that provides the essentials for making various fruit pies or can purchase dough to make a variety of cookies. There seems to be a little something for everyone!

**ERC
Corner**

The ERC is looking to offer Six Flags season tickets for Spring 2006. Those who have purchased these tickets from ERC in the past, have remarked on how cost-effective they are.

The trip to the Mohegan Sun Casino, which was originally scheduled for January 14th, has been rescheduled to February 11th. There are still seats available at a cost of \$30, which includes a \$10 match-and-play ticket and a free buffet or a \$10 food coupon. Please contact Cherri Cedrone at (203) 271-5404 for more information.

Members of the ERC are hard at work planning the annual "Spring Gathering" for a Saturday evening in May and the "Night of Honors" ceremony for the autumn. More information about both of these events will be forthcoming.

Finally, to keep abreast of all ERC happenings, be sure to check the DMV Intranet site at <http://www.ct.gov/insidedmv>.

DMV Today

*a publication of
The Department of
Motor Vehicles
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Wethersfield, CT 06161*

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Compliance Review

We have an engagement announcement! Lt. Frank Baio's sister, Mary-Ann Baio, recently became engaged!

Mary-Ann is a former long-time employee at DMV. After Mary-Ann told her mother, and called her brother in his Waterbury office, the first place she went to was to visit Sue Hopkins and all her other wonderful friends and extended 'family' at the Wethersfield Office. We wish Mary-Ann and her fiancée, Roger, all the best.

Corporate and Public Relations

We would like to extend our condolences to Franny Oviedo and his family on the passing of his grandmother, Hilaria Cuba.

Danbury Branch Office

Happy New Year's from the Danbury Office! We hope everyone had a happy holiday season. We would like to welcome our new employees, Larry Cuevas and Joyce Ramos, to the Danbury Office.

Congratulations to Debbie Bozzomo and her husband Don, who will be first-time grandparents. Debbie's son, Todd, and his wife, Leslie, are expecting in August.

Hamden Branch Office

We are all trying to get back to normal after the holidays, taking down decorations and moving on to the new year. We have two new additions to our Hamden family, agents Juan Navarro and Stanley Griskewicz. Welcome aboard!

We would also like to congratulate Jim Jaliwicz on his promotion to the Commercial Driving School Unit in Waterbury at the Rowland Government Center. Enjoy your car ride! We'll miss you "Golden Boy."

The Hamden Office would also like to send our sympathy out to Gus and Miriam Roman on their mom's passing. We wish everyone a happy and healthy new year.

Human Resources/Payroll

Susan Soares joined the Payroll Unit in December, just before Christmas. With Payroll handling so many things, it seemed that Susan was busy before she could be introduced to everyone. Welcome to Human Resources/Payroll, Susan!

Old Saybrook Branch Office

Greetings from the Old Saybrook Office. We hope everyone's new year has gotten off to a good start. We have a couple of announcements to share with you.

First, and long overdue, are congratulations to Rachel Young on her appointment in July to the position of head examiner.

Rachel's commitment and concern for co-workers and the public are stronger than ever.

Maintainer John Campbell is busy training Carl Gennaro, his replacement, who started here three weeks ago. John will be the full-time maintainer in Norwich. (Their gain, our loss). The big question is: Can Carl decorate? John created such lovely scenes for each holiday which were appreciated by everyone.

Inspector Larry Ahern has returned to Old Saybrook to help with the backlog of driving tests, assist in the processing of new residents and other duties. As in other offices, we enjoyed our Christmas pot-luck buffet and the visit from Barbara Tanuis, Mike Generis and others, as they made their rounds spreading holiday cheer.

Around The Agency

Unwilling to put the festivities behind us in Old Saybrook, many of us have made New Year's resolutions. Let's see if we stick to them! Now, we anxiously await spring and the boating season.

Northwest Branch Office

The Northwest DMV is starting the new year off with a name change to the "North Pole!" Old Man Winter dumped about 18 inches of snow in the area on our first workday back in the year. We are looking forward to that "January Thaw!" We wish all our fellow DMV Employees a happy, healthy new year.



From the left, Grisel Toucet of Emissions, JoAnne Saksa of Emissions, Bob Weber of Internal Audit, Adam Grippo of Fiscal Services and Madalena Silva of Emissions make their way through the buffet line during the holiday party at the Rowland State Government Center last month.

Retired Employees

Anthony ("Tony") Armentano, formerly of the Administrative Services Division, was married on Dec. 3. In early January, he and his bride enjoyed an extended honeymoon to Florida. Congratulations!

Waterbury Branch Office

Goodbye and good luck to Noreen Rinaldo who went back to Bridgeport after being trained here in Waterbury. Happy birthday goes out to Joyce Nowell (Jan. 17) and Andrea DeNicola (Jan. 30). Also a happy first anniversary to agent Jim Zalot. Where did the year go?

Wethersfield Branch Office

Farewell 2005 and hello 2006! We hope the holidays were good for everyone! This past Christmas season, we collected many gifts for a needy family we adopted. To all who participated, your generosity did not go unnoticed. You all showed what true Christmas spirit is all about.

Thank you so much to everyone who wrapped and donated items. We would like to welcome Robin DeNicola back to work. We missed you!

Wethersfield thought for the month: Remember to always move your car before a storm to avoid falling trees!

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Diversity of Generations at Work

In an agency with roughly 800 employees who assist thousands of customers each day, communication can be a vital tool for everyone in the DMV. Whether you're a seasoned DMV staff member, or a new-hire still learning the job, how we interact can be a key to workplace success.

Social scientists have identified the merging of four unique generations within today's workforce: the Veterans (born between 1922 and 1945), the Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), and Generation Y (born between 1980 and 2000). Generally, each of these generations possess varying fundamental values, methods of communicating, goals, and ideas about how to get things done.

H.R. Thought You Should Know

A multigenerational workforce provides creativity, risk taking, a myriad of experiences, and a varied knowledge base. However, these opposing views can also collide when trying to build teams or dealing with change.

How do you merge the best of what we all have to offer? It is important to understand that our generation group determines how we communicate. Before drawing conclusions about what your co-worker or your next customer just said, try seeing things from his or her point of view. Chances are you will be enriched by the diversity found in others' communications. Once you understand these differences, you can increase your productivity and satisfaction on the job by anticipating their influence in day-to-day communication.

Around the Agency

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Notes of Thanks

We thank all of you who have made our experience so much better. All of you have demonstrated a great deal of love for our family during these difficult times. You have filled us with an amazing amount of joy and happiness. We have been blessed time and time again by the outpour of love and support we have received from all of you. There will never be any words to describe our appreciation we feel for having friends who care so dearly for our family.

Mariah is also very appreciative for all the gifts Santa has brought her during these very special holidays and is doing well with her treatment. I hope that in the future we can always come together to help our families in need of love and support. The feeling of all of you coming together to help us has been felt and will never be forgotten. May God bless all of you and your families.

Sincerely,
Yolanda Cruz, Robert Boria and Mariah

Thank you to all my fellow co-workers who helped to gather gifts and necessities for a family adopted this year from the Nutmeg Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization. With so many contributions from agency employees, we were able to provide for five children, ages 2 to 14, along with their mom.

The impact of everyone's generosity and support had on this family not only during the holidays, but even now, is difficult to express. The level of everyone's giving was truly awe-inspiring.

Sincerely,
Catherine Dell'Oro of Audit Services

When Bad Weather Strikes, Employees Have a Number to Call

The DMV phone center now provides a recording to announce a delayed opening or close of business in the event of severe weather.

The numbers are **860-263-5700 (within the Hartford area or outside of Connecticut)** or **800-842-8222 (elsewhere in Connecticut)**. Furthermore, the DMV

Web site (<http://dmvct.org>) will also provide the latest information for such happenings.

When possible, the announce-

ments will be made early enough for you to check prior to leaving for work. However, there can be no guarantee because DMV must wait for the official decision that affects all agencies.



“Sharp Eyes” Sitaro Pulls No Punches

Joe Sitaro of the Emissions Division goes face-to-face with boxing’s best

By Ernie Bertoth

You may have heard of “Iron” Mike Tyson, “Sugar Ray” Leonard and “Smokin’” Joe Frazier, who each dazzled sold-out crowds and knocked out boxing opponents for years. Now, one DMV employee has found a part-time niche within the sport known as “the sweet science.”

Just call him, Joe “Sharp Eyes” Sitaro.

Joe works in the Emissions Division by day and dabbles in the boxing world on certain nights. As a boxing inspector, Joe ensures the safety and integrity of pro fights throughout Connecticut.

Professional boxers beware — Joe is watching. And his presence has earned him respect from fighters, trainers and corner men alike.

“I’ve liked sports all my life,” said Joe, who has worked over 200 matches, to explain his motivation. “This was a way to be involved in pro sports.”

Joe’s father-in-law introduced him to the job in the early 1980s, when the two saw a bout in Hartford. His father-in-law, also boxing inspector, gave Joe an opportunity.

“He (My father-in-law) told me to watch a guy get his hands wrapped before a match,” Joe said. “And I said, ‘But, I don’t know what to watch.’ But, the boxer didn’t know that.”

Since then, Joe has risen through the ranks to become the chief boxing inspector at Foxwoods Casino, a venue that holds numerous matches throughout the year. Joe, also a member of the state’s boxing promotion commission, observes fighters during pre-bout rituals and during the match to make sure proper procedures are followed.

From the locker room to the ring, Joe takes in every moment to be the eyes and ears of the boxing commission, the governing body of the sport in Connecticut.

Before any right hook, jab or uppercut takes place, Joe observes the boxer’s pre-fight preparations. Some of his duties include monitoring the tape-wrapping of hands and glove-lacing, and advising the fighter’s team of proper and improper activities.

The boxer’s gloves can be an easy way to cheat, Joe said.

For instance, a glove’s padding must align with the

fighter’s knuckles for safety purposes. Furthermore, a glove’s laces must be knotted on top of the hand and be

covered. If the knot is exposed, it can be used illegally to injure an opponent.

Joe sits at a ringside location during the fight. He listens to conversations in the boxer’s corner, scrutinizes the medical attention given to a fighter and alerts the referee to any wrongdoing.

“It’s pretty fascinating,” said Joe, who has been caught on camera from time-to-time on nationally televised bouts. “I’ve seen some pretty great fights.”

In 1998, Joe caught a corner man in the act of cheating in a championship fight at Mohegan Sun.

“A fighter had a cut on his face and the corner man told another corner man to go get something from the back,” Joe recalled. “That alerted me to pay really close attention.”

The man came back with a substance to put on the gash. Just before the ointment was placed on the fighter, Joe stepped up to the apron and grabbed the material,

which turned out to be unapproved. The fighter had to be treated with something else.

“It just goes to show you, I’m there for a reason,” said Joe, who has worked matches involving athletes such as Evander Holyfield and Larry Holmes, both former champions.

Joe has also participated in several seminars to advance his knowledge of boxing rules. One such memorable class involved instruction from Arthur Mercante, who referred a legendary match that was called “The Fight of the Century” between Muhammad Ali and Frazier.

“You meet some interesting and famous people,” said Joe, who has been introduced to big-name fighters such as Lennox Lewis and Roy Jones, Jr. during his time as an inspector.

While Joe never had aspirations of becoming a pro boxer, his position as a fight official suits him just fine. His next night on duty was scheduled for Jan. 20 at Foxwoods.

“I certainly wouldn’t want to be boxer,” Joe said. “But, this is a way to be involved.”



Lennox Lewis, left, is one of the many famous boxers Joe Sitaro of Emissions, right, has met.

CVSD Inspectors Cover the State to Enforce Safety

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Weighing In

At 7 a.m. one December morning, I was privileged to ride with Amy. We head to the Middletown weigh station in a police-cruiser, equipped with emergency lights and sirens.

To my surprise, Amy, along with the 17 other motor vehicle inspectors in the Motor Carrier Unit are certified law enforcement officers and have the same powers and privileges as any police officer in Connecticut while engaged in enforcement of Connecticut motor vehicle laws. She dresses the part, wearing a dark blue uniform with outlined gold patches and a bulletproof vest underneath. She carries a firearm, pepper spray, a baton and handcuffs.

"The vast majority of on-the-road officers in different states throughout the country are not from Motor Vehicles," Dennis explained "Connecticut's DMV inspectors go out on roads everyday, fining violators, assisting in investigations and enforcing the law."

The weigh station resembles a bank's drive-through window. A truck pulls up to a window and is weighed on three scales. Inspectors are able to communicate to the driver through a loudspeaker, and a drawer is used to transfer documents.

Once the truck's weight information is processed through a computer within the station, the inspector allows the driver to proceed or has the driver park if it is overweight and often does a full inspection on the truck.

The Chase

Dennis, a certified laser operator, is parked on the weigh station's exit ramp, and points a laser gun at vehicles traveling on I-91 North. Amy and I wait about 10 minutes across the street from where Sgt. Maurice is parked. He soon beeps in on the two-way radio and dispatches a coded message to Amy.

She puts the car in "drive" as I grasp onto my seat. I am amazed that so many motorists fail to get out of her way despite the sirens and flashing lights.

When we finally catch up to the truck and safely pull it over, Amy views its license plate information.

I ask her if she is ever nervous walking up to the truck, not knowing what she will encounter.

"I'm not going to lie to you," Amy says. "Sometimes the hair on my neck stands up." She pauses.

"I try to be safe, but if my time is up... I figure I could be killed in a plane just as well."

She courageously steps out of the cruiser and walks up to the vehicle with cars rushing by within feet of her at speeds that surpass the legal limit. She collects the driver's license, registration and insurance information.

"If I stop a terrorist, it will be worth it," she says when she

comes back.

After ticketing the driver for speeding, instead of going back to the weigh station, Amy and I set out to find a motor vehicle violator on our own.

Experience Pays Off

Before long, Amy is on the loudspeaker ordering an old rusted semi-truck to follow her to the next exit.

"Training and experience led me to pick up this truck," she says. "This company is notorious for violations."

Before performing the inspection, Amy researches the driver's driving history, criminal record and the carrier information on her computer.

The driver is a registered sex offender.

"That is nothing," Amy says when she saw a bit of fear in my eyes. "Once I pulled someone over who had a warrant out for his arrest. I handcuffed him and brought him to the police station. You wouldn't believe some of the stories we have."

Amy performs a full inspection on the truck, getting underneath it, opening the hood and circling the outside of the vehicle.

"Two inspections are never the same," she says. "You are always subject to the unknown, a different driver, a different truck."

As I get under the truck, all I see are shapes of metal that could use a little cleaning, but Amy finds two major brake violations and puts the truck out-of-service, which means the truck can't be driven until the violations are repaired.

Their Work is Never Done

After pulling a few more vehicles over for moving violations, we journey back to Wethersfield to sign off.

Just when I think I have seen as much as I could for one day, we turn the corner a few miles from the DMV only to encounter a three-car crash in Hartford, which is blocking a lane of traffic.

"This job brings a new experience everyday," Amy says. "You get out of it what you make of it."

She quickly turns on her flashing lights, and gets out of the vehicle to make sure no one is injured.

After she sees everyone involved in the accident is all right, she calls CVSD's Communication Unit to contact the Hartford Police and have them send an officer to the scene.

Amy collects license and registration information from all of the drivers and looks up all of their records.

"Just when you think your day is ending, it isn't," Amy says.